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THE ROUND TABLE

BOWLING WITH GRAMMAR

A simple but stimulating method of testing daily drill in grammar may be had by giving ten daily tests, each containing ten points for marking on the scale of ten, and scoring day by day according to bowling rules (with some modifications). Pupils become interested at the start when bowling is suggested and keep interested as they watch their scores day by day. If the teacher announces definitely just what will be tested the next day, pupils prepare with unusual care for it. The test is of value to the teacher, because it shows how successful each pupil has been in grasping the essential point of the discussion and in fixing it in his mind.

Following is the score of a class of nineteen pupils in English I who were very deficient in grammar and punctuation, and who were given especial drill in the mechanics of writing.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.....	9	17	26	31	36	42	49	65*	71	75
2.....	8	12	18	24	29	38	47	64*	71	75
3.....	a	18*	26	35	42	60*	68	77	84	93
4.....	8	15	19	22	26	34	43	57*	61	64
5.....	7	15	22	28	32	38	46	55	62	92*
6.....	7	16	24	42*	50	59	64	83*	92	100
7.....	5	11	11a	14	17	24	48*	62*	66	73
8.....	17*	24	42*	50	57	87*	116*	135*	144	152
9.....	7	8	11	13	13	17	26	49*	52	55
10.....	6	13	22	29	37	55*	63	80*	87	94
11.....	7	35*	53*	61	68	77	104*	121*	128	134
12.....	9	16	22	29	35	42	68*	84*	90	95
13.....	9	18	24	27	31	39	47	56	63	67
14.....	8	17	24	29	33	41	49	67*	75	78
15.....	8	16	25	30	35	42	51	59	68	74
16.....	8	26*	34	52*	60	78*	86	103*	110	117
17.....	9	16	23	31	37	40	48	63*	68	77
18.....	a	a	a	7	9	18	37*	46	51	52
19.....	9	9	17	21	23	28	37	44	51	53

*The asterisk indicates a strike.

The greatest change from regular bowling score rules is the omission of the spare; this is necessary because of the difficulty of providing a "second roll." Since the series scored above ended on the last day of

the semester, it was impossible to give opportunity for those making strikes the last day to profit by future "rolls" to which in bowling they would be entitled to; so the class agreed to give instead a premium of 10. It happened that only one pupil made a strike the last day; the test for that day was especially difficult, being upon clauses, most of them adverbial.

The strike is indicated on the score above by an asterisk. In actual class procedure, a regular bowling score sheet and crayon may be provided, or some of the boys of the class will volunteer to draw one upon the blackboard; the scores can then be inserted with colored chalk. In case pupils object to having their names written upon the board (which I have not found to be the case), each pupil may provide himself with a number unknown to the rest of the class. On the score printed, I have substituted the numbers 1 to 19 for the names of the pupils.

Here is one of the tests given; it was given on the day following class discussion and drill upon *lay* and *lie*.

Fill the blanks in the following sentences with some form of *lay* or *lie*:

1. ——— still until the doctor comes.
2. The man ——— the brick for the foundation stopped to look at his watch.
3. Having ——— all the brick, he sat down to rest.
4. ——— still is difficult.
5. The dog ——— quiet while his master goes away.
6. I saw the man ——— the gun in the boat.
7. I saw the gun ——— there.
8. ——— the gun alongside the ax.
9. Having ——— for two hours, I thought it time to go to work.
10. He was ordered to ——— in wait for the animal.

Such a test is quickly given, it may be easily and rapidly marked by the teacher, and it indicates definitely just how well the pupils have learned the distinction between the two words.

Examination of the score sheet shows some interesting facts. Tests vary greatly in difficulty. Compare frame 5, where no strikes were made, with frame 8, where 13 were made. This is difficult to avoid; of course the difference does not occur at all in bowling. But the chance for any one day is the same for all pupils. The scheme works a hardship on those who are absent; but interest in the scheme may prevent some absence that might otherwise occur. Five days' absence out of a possible 190 days is not a high enough percentage to invalidate the device, especially in influenza times. On the other hand, the scheme provides for overcoming the handicap of absence; pupil No. 3, for instance, was

absent the first day, made a strike on the second day, and tied with No. 13 for fourth place on the second day's score. No. 18 was absent the first three days, but lacked only one point of equaling No. 19, who was there, physically, every day.

Each pupil can easily tell whether he has passed the series of tests. Sixty per cent is passing; so an average of six a day gives a passing mark for the series. The pupil whose score falls below sixty does not need to have the fact pointed out to him that he is not doing passing work. The whole principle of the scheme is to give reward for exceptionally good work, and not to punish anyone. The poorest pupil gets no less than he would get if the better ones were not rewarded.

Inspection of the score sheet shows another point of interest to the teacher: the goats are distinctly separated from the sheep in the final score. It is not difficult to see that Nos. 6, 8, 11, and 16 are the best in the class, and that Nos. 3, 10, and 12 are good. Nos. 9 and 19, also, speak for themselves. Moreover, a comparison of the score sheet with the ten tests shows what points need further drill by the entire class and what points may be dropped except in individual cases. For example, the class here scored needs little further drill upon *sit* and *set* (frame 8), but needs much more drill upon clauses (frame 10).

The same device may easily be used for punctuation tests, capitalization tests, etc. It could much more easily be used in mathematics classes. It might seem at first glance that the scoring itself involves too much mathematics for an English class, but a day's practice makes the rules for scoring quite simple to the class. Moreover, it gives the mathematics teachers a chance to return the favor by insisting upon good English in the mathematics classes. It is not a device that will make pie and cake of grammar and punctuation, but it will add a little flavor and spice to drill that without such seasoning tends to become dry and insipid.

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HOW DO YOU DO IT?

"Oh, but it isn't worth while to remember these authors and their books because we'll never hear of them after we leave school." How many times have you teachers of English faced this mental attitude upon the part of high-school pupils who cannot see any practical value in the study of English and American literature? "If you say that good English is written today, too, why can't we read up-to-date stories